

Seed Enterprise Management Institute Launched.

University of Nairobi, College of Agriculture and Veterinary Sciences have launched Seed Enterprise Management Institute, SEMIS.

The Institute will be a center for training farmers on seed preservation, separation, treatment, packaging and management. The project has been funded by AGRA at approximately USD 5 Million. Other partners include the University of Nairobi, Kenya Seed Company among others

Speaking during the launch, Chairman of Council, Dr. Idle Farah, noted that SEMIs fully embraces University of Nairobi mandate of teaching, learning, research and extension. The centre so far has trained over 850 farmers from across 17 African countries. The institute embraces partnership and linkages both with organizations locally and internationally.

"We are in a drought situation, SEMIS can help us deal with food security in the country", said Dr. Farah. He noted that agriculture is key to the Kenyan economy and it contributes 26% of the GDP. Agriculture faces numerous challenges, key among them ; inefficient seed supply, environmental degradation, unprocessed produce, poorly mechanized agriculture as farmers still rely on rainfall.

Dr. Farah urged the College of Agriculture and Veterinary Sciences, CAVs, to be at the forefront in agricultural training as the college boasts of large number of academic staff, good facilities for teaching and learning, large number of alumni, practical training. He took the opportunity to congratulate the college for performing well at the Nairobi international Trade Fair 2016 and getting several awards.

On his part, Dr. Joe DeVries, Chief Agricultural Transformation, AGRA, noted that AGRA began as a dream to help African farmers increase their food produce and help the continent feed her population. He described SEMIS as 'vibrant, competitive, seed company and a training facility for farmers'. He added that SEMIS offers young farmers a practical learning opportunity and enables them to start their own companies.

Vice-Chancellor, Prof. Peter Mbithi congratulated the lead researcher , Prof. Agnes Mwan'gombe, who has worked hard to see the dream materialize. He as well congratulated the College Principal, Prof. Stephen Kiama for his exemplary leadership.

Also present during the launch were members of the University Council , University Management Board, staff and students from the Faculty of Agriculture.